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Message Text

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61
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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB PRIORITY
USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 092681

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YO
SUBJECT: FSFA COUNSELOR SEKULOVSKI CALL ON DEPUTY ASSIS-
TANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE

1. DURING MAY 14 CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE, FSFA COUNSELOR SEKULOVSKI SAID THAT A YUGOSLAV REVIEW OF FOREIGN PRESS TREATMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE BEEN OVERLY SENSITIVE AND PERHAPS OVERREACTED, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO US PRESS ARTICLES. SEKULOVSKI EXPLAINED THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAD MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THAT FOREIGN JOURNALISTS RESIDENT IN YUGOSLAVIA WOULD BETTER HAVE UNDERSTOOD REASONS BEHIND STRENGTHENING THE LCY. PRESS STORIES THAT YUGOSLAVIA WAS MOVING TOWARD EASTERN BLOC AND USSR AND AGAINST US WERE " NOT TRUE". HE POINTED OUT THAT HISTORICAL RECORD SHOWS THAT LCY IS ANTI- STALINIST, STAUNCHLY PRO-YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE AND HAS WORKED FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS
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WITH WEST. HE EXPLAINED THAT INITIAL STEPS TO STRENGTHEN LCY WERE NECESSARY BUT SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS " WILL BE BETTER". ON THE BASIS OF THIS REVIEW, YUGOSLAVS REALIZE THAT THEY HAD MADE MISTAKES IN THEIR EXPLANATIONS TO THE PRESS.

2. ARMITAGE SUGGESTED THAT YUGOSLAVS MIGHT CONSIDER USE OF BACKGROUNDERS FOR BRIEFING WESTERN JOURNALISTS IN

YUGOSLAVIA. WHILE THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE THAT THE JOURNALISTS WOULD AGREE WITH VIEWS PRESENTED TO THEM IT WAS OUR EXPERIENCE THAT RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISTS RESPECT AND GIVE WEIGHT TO CANDID PRESENTATIONS.

3. ARMITAGE ALSO MENTIONED THAT ON THE BASIS OF A PERSONAL INFORMAL SURVEY OF AMERICANS NOT WELL- INFORMED ON YUGOSLAVIA, HE FOUND THAT THEIR REACTIONS TO PRESS STORIES ON YUGOSLAVIA WERE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE GOY, LEADING HIM TO THINK THAT THE YUGOSLAVS WERE OVERLY SENSITIVE.

4. SEKULOVSKI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE AND THAT THE YUGOSLAV EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD MADE THIS POINT. SEKULOVSKI WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PRESIDENT' S FOREIGN POLICY REPORT AND THE SECRETARY' S FOREIGN POLICY REPORT, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY AND ITS NON- ALIGNED POLICIES, WERE VERY HELPFUL AND IMPORTANT IN CORRECTING THE DISTORTIONS THAT HAD APPEARED IN GERMAN, FRENCH AND ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS. RUSH

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